

Written copy of Stephen
Sneddon verbal submission

NSW IPC Martins Creek Quarry Public Meeting

I would like to pay my respect to the traditional owners both past and present on whose lands we are gathered today and welcome and thank the IPC Commissioners' coming to Paterson.

I'm Stephen Sneddon I am a Member of MartinsCQAG however am here today representing the three generations of my family residing in this community for over 47 years.

I would like to **voice our objection** to the Martins Creek Quarry Project. A quarry approved for the **winning of railway ballast material** and now reclassified for approval as a **General Aggregate Quarry**- interestingly a point never noted in the Assessment report of Oct 2022.

I would like to draw the Commissioners attention to the VIBE of the community and how this project has been presented to the community and regulators alike from both technical and real lived experiences.

So the VIBE, a first impression, visual or an emotional atmosphere or the real lived experiences of a community living near the quarry and along its haulage routes.

The predicted impacts as per the Assessments of Oct 2022 have already been experienced so it is very important to understand what you are hearing is not based on modelling nor perception - **it has happened before and these are real life experiences.**

From the onset the project has been sold as a reduction in approval sought from 1.5MT 30yr project to a 1.1MT 25 year project and the

Department has now said the “applicant was listening to regulators and the community”. Actually if you view the response from the Director Resource Assessments to the Applicant dated 2/12/16 what is clear, is, the EIS including the incorrect baseline used was totally inadequate as highlighted in attachment 2.

Unfortunately the recent assessment of Oct 2022 continues **the sell - a reduction in scale up front, and on page 5, what is actually approved today.**

The baseline is not 1.5mtpa nor 1.1mtpa it is 500,000 tpa and the trucking baseline is 60 trucking movement per day - not 480 down to 280 etc

300,000 Consent -
-EPA

as highlighted on page 2 defining the project assessment.

If presenting correctly it really changes the VIBE

So Commissioners what you see today and what you witnessed during your site inspection is the **real baseline** that should have been adopted for all modelling to assess the impacts of the reclothed project.

So what’s the VIBE of Paterson, an idyllic quaint rural village with a thriving CBD, schools, churches, historical buildings really a great place to live, play and visit. Actually Commissioners you would have picked up this VIBE the entire trip from East Maitland all the way up here.

I’m biased and proud to admit it so I went for a bit of google independence and found the Microburbs Report for Paterson generated from 2021 census data and yes confirmed. In summary Tranquillity 10/10, Lifestyle 10/10, Family 8/10, Safety 10/10 and Community 10/10

So why, did this idyllic community’s members have over **634 submissions been received objecting to SSD-6612,**

the answer is easy because they have already lived through what is predicted

I hope you listen to these real lived experiences because

there is no box to tick for this in the assessment process.

What has the DPIE conclude, what's their VIBE.

The assessment emphasises the need to carefully balanced consideration of competing land uses. The DPIE believe their assessment has achieved this, a balance of environmental, social and economic costs and benefits of the project. **I don't agree this to be the case nor do the people in this room. The outcomes are still the same and the risks to sustaining a viable, liveable community are almost certainly.**

The DPIE state several times in the assessment the proposed production rates for the project are not dissimilar to the illegal period of production, and that residents have been subject to these impacts for many years. **Why does this make it acceptable? Does the DPIE believe it is acceptable to disregard approvals?**

On page 30 of the assessment traffic and transport the DPIE "considers that an appropriate mix of road and rail transportation options have been incorporated into the project to balance road haulage related impacts on the community with **the viability of the quarry**".

There appears to be a heavily weighted sentiment from the DPIE towards the **viability of this Quarry**. I think it prudent to remind the DPIE that there are many other quarries suppling similar products into the market place who only want to compete on a level playing field.

Did the DPIE in their assessment independently research the supply of product coming on line or rely solely on the applicant's information? As we speak ARDG at Seaham are seeking application to bring on line 1.5Mtpa for 30years of similar product that will not be travelling through a multitude of communities. **Liveable sustainable communities are also a priority and the viability of Paterson is under serious threat with this project.**

The viability of the community nor the approval process was never considered when (As quote in the Newcastle Morning Herald) the operators of the quarry knowingly breached their consent and illegally extracted over \$100mil worth of product from the quarry causing community rage, mayhem and dysfunction.

On page 31 the DPIE acknowledges traffic and transport impacts from the road haulage are a key community concern and states these concerns are **fully understandable**.

They then go on to say the applicants TIA indicates, that the traffic volumes generated by the project **would not result** in a change to existing level of service of each of the roads along the primary haulage routes.

The DPIE then state the broader traffic growth would generate the same amount of deterioration with or without the project.

I ask the commissioners how this could be a reasonable and feasible comment, how injecting 280 truck movements per day will not impact the local roads. If the concern was fully understandable there is no evidence of interrogating this point.

My lived experience of our last injection of 280 truck movements per day was of local learner drivers terrified and trying to stay off these routes. My elderly neighbours ceased their weekly trips to

Maitland/Paterson due to fear of the trucks. These folk became socially isolated and I believe the trucking seriously contributed to a loss of wellbeing and a sense of place for them. I could go on and on.

It was truly a community under siege.

The Noise and Air Assessments, adopted data from the illegal operation period, as similar to the new project. Residents were subjected to these levels for years and were outraged. **That's why we are here today.**

Using this data to inform baselines or a new project is incorrect and accepting this, is neither reasonable nor feasible approach to project assessment.

I would now like to discuss the Social Impact Assessment. On page 49 the DPIE acknowledge that the nature and scale social impacts are difficult to accurately predict, particularly in relation to intangible aspects. Never the less the DPIE's in house social assessment expert found the SIA was thorough, inclusive and meaningful and the community and stakeholder engagement process represented leading practice in SIA.

I attended one of the Social Collaborative Assessment Forums and shortly after penned a note to the Senior Planning Officer Mineral and Quarry Assessment.

Read out letter

It was interesting to hear MartinsCQAG comments from three independent experts in this field that a number residual social risks should have been more correctly rated as **"Almost Certain"** to occur having a **"major"** social impact that will result in an **Extreme or Very High risk rating**. **The mitigation measures such as a driver protocol as discussed in the assessment are soft measures and inadequate.**

The SIA omitted to include the loss of social capital. This community has already suffered the loss of valuable community members due to this

project. There has also been considerable change in business ownership over the last two years. These new owners have not felt the continual pressure of trying **to stay viable under the burden of the horrendous social cost imposed on this community by the Quarry.**

I believe the Social Impacts in the assessment are deficient in the following areas:-

***Traffic/transport.** It has not addressed the increase in rail movement of the new projects product being a fine product with a high silica content. There is a line of thought that all product should be moved from the new project by rail.

The assessment failed to explore whether this create or just simply relocate a potential significant health issue? The health and welfare of people living adjacent to the rail also needs to be considered.

This should be explored by the applicant supporting the Hunter and Upper Hunter Regional Air Quality network by installing real time air quality monitoring instruments in Paterson and Maitland to understand these fine particle background levels prior to any project alteration.

This would provide real valuable baseline information and ensure if rail transportation of this new product was increased and potential health impacts identified, measures could be implemented to mitigate the impacts. These air quality networks are totally transparent and accessible to the community via the web.

***Amenity** is much broader than Martins Creek. Liveability is a major aspect of overall amenity. I have spoken with people from Gostywick Bridge to Flat Road. Their **lived experience was shear fear when entering or leaving their properties** during the trucking. They were even more worried when visitors came as they had no idea of the intensity of the trucking.

* **Sense of Community** is much broader than Paterson and extends the entire transport route. There are numerous communities and clusters of housing along the transport route that have suffered the same impacts as the people of Paterson.

* **Community Trust**, the loss of trust has been driven by the applicant's total lack of empathy and total disrespect of community. I'm sure the infamous School of Arts Hall meeting where the founder and owner of the quarry operator informed all in attendance including the DPIE representatives "**if you don't like it move**".

* **Health** issues such as depression and anxiety are hidden and community donations won't fix this. The ongoing social cost to this community and others is a burden the community still shoulders from the illegal periods. I don't believe it to be reasonable or feasible for our communities **to prop up the viability of the quarry operation at the expense of the community's health.**

My final topic is the Real Time Monitoring as discussed within part B of the specific Environmental Conditions. These conditions and associated equipment is not contemporary, they have been in place since pre 2005 in other mining communities within the Valley. If used correctly they can be a very successful tool in mitigating impacts for quarrying/mining activities and are transparent to community via the web.

A major omission from the assessment is to ensure all real time air, real time and directional noise, real time met including inversion detection, blasting, water, complaints, and daily volumes of material leaving the site is **captured within this system and that it is transparent to the community and regulators.**

Web based system such as these are common place within the Hunter and I believe should be in place for the current level of activity within the existing quarry.

In conclusion I believe the assessment to be inappropriate due to:-

***the use of incorrect baseline data for all modelling of impacts for the new project, and**

***the process for determination of residual social risk.**

The impacts from an illegal operations resulted in Extreme or Very High social risks to a community. I fail to see how by legitimising the same level of impact through a contemporary consent will result in a different outcome.

Thankyou